# Understanding Accountability in New Jersey

## Background

The federal *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) requires all states to establish standards for accountability for all schools and districts in the states. Furthermore, it calls for the inclusion of <u>all</u> students, even students who may have been excluded or exempted from participating in the state assessment program in the past. The foundation for the accountability system is based on state curriculum content standards, which define what students should know and be able to do, and aligned assessments to measure whether students have mastered these standards. The accountability system looks at the degree to which students across schools and districts are mastering state standards.

NCLB also has set the goal of 100% proficiency by the year 2014. In the intervening years, state benchmarks have been established for each grade level cluster (grades 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12) and each content area. The "State Benchmarks for Adequate Yearly Progress" is attached. These benchmarks must be attained for not only <u>all</u> students enrolled in the school, but also for all significant student groups to ensure as we move toward the goal of 100% proficiency so no child is left behind.

New Jersey's accountability system requires that those schools without a state test grade, e.g., K-2, be included in the accountability system by joining schools without test grades to the receiving school with a test grade, and treating them as one accountability unit.

The single accountability also calls for district accountability. To measure district performance, the data from all the schools in the district will be aggregated. The same accountability steps will be applied.

To more fully explain how accountability is measured, this document outlines each step and checkpoint factored into calculating Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Additionally, the attached table, "Accountability Worksheet" summarizes the accountability steps.

## Calculating Adequate Yearly Progress

### Part I. Preliminary Data Checks

**95% Participation**

## Step 1

In concert with the call for inclusion, we must assure the participation of all students in the state assessment. Therefore, the first questions to be asked are:

– Did 95% of all students enrolled in the school, as of July 1$^{st}$ for grade 4 and September 15 for grade 8 & 11, participate in the assessment, including LEP and special education students?

– Did 95% of all students within each student subgroup participate in the assessment? (Subgroups include: racial/ethnic groups, economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient.)

If a school or district answers "no" to either question, then adequate yearly progress was not made.

## Part II. Secondary Measures

Secondary measures must also be built into the calculation of adequate yearly progress. Standards for these measures must be met by the entire school population (and then each subgroup for which safe harbor is applied) in order to make AYP. These measures are:

– Graduation rate/drop-out data: NCLB requires states to review graduation rate data that is calculated by determining the proportion of students graduating after four years enrollment in the high school. This requires a student level tracking system. For this year, the drop-out rate data will be used. In subsequent years, graduation rate data will be the secondary measure.

– Attendance rate data will be applied at the elementary and middle school levels. The Average Daily Attendance (ADA) calculation for the total school will be lifted from the ASSA report. If safe harbor is used for any subgroup, district/schools will be notified and asked to report back the disaggregated attendance rate data by relevant subgroup and affirm the data by signing a Statement of Assurances.

The questions to be asked related to secondary measures are:

– High Schools: If the school is a high school, was the school's dropout rate less than 2.6% or is it .5% less than the previous year?

– Elementary and Middle Schools: If the school is an elementary school or middle school, did the Average Daily Attendance for the school year reported on the ASSA meet or exceed 90%?

Again, if the answer to either question is "no", the school/district did not make AYP.

**Part III. Test Score Adjustments**

**Step 1 - Statistically Significant**

Because it has been determined that any student group with fewer than 20 students is not statistically significant, prior to looking at subgroup performance any group with less than 20 students will be excluded from the AYP calculation. The questions to be posed are:

– Were the results for subgroups with less than 20 students suppressed?

– Were the results for all subgroups with 20 or more students reported?

**Step 2 – Student Mobility**

Because accountability applies to schools and districts and is a measure of their performance, the results of students who have not been enrolled a full academic year are pulled from the reported score lists. To facilitate this, at the time of test administration student booklets were coded. The test scores from newly enrolled or mobile students are suppressed before any state performance data is analyzed. At the time of test administration, the following question should be asked:

– Were all students who enrolled after September 15, 2002 (at grades 8 and 11) and July 1, 2002 (at grade 4) noted and were their results pulled from the accountability tally? *

* The initial date for mobility was September 15 of each school year; the date was later pushed back to July l. This change was effected for grade 4 and will apply in future administrations to all state tests

**Step 3 - Misclassification Rate**

To protect against misclassifying any school or district as having failed to make AYP, a 5% error band will be wrapped around the performance of the total school population as well as that of each student subgroup. Therefore, the following question should be asked:

– Were the actual performance outcomes for the total student population and each subgroup adjusted by adding a 5% band around the total percent scoring proficient and advanced proficient?
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**Part IV. Review of Test Results**

**Step 1 - Test Results for All Students**

Once the score adjustments are made, actual student outcomes for the total enrollment and all student subgroups must be made. The key questions to be asked when looking at student performance data are:

- Did the "total population" pass rate attain the AYP benchmark?

- Did <u>each</u> of the following student subgroups with 20 or more students attain the benchmark:

  - White students;
  - African American students;
  - Hispanic students;
  - Asian/Pacific Islander students;
  - Native American/Indian students;
  - Other racial group students;
  - Economically disadvantaged students;
  - Students with disabilities; and
  - Students of limited English proficiency?

If the answer to the first question is "no", then the school did not make AYP.

If the answer to the first question is "yes", but the answer to any student subgroup is "no", then for each subgroup with a "no" response, a safe harbor calculation must be made in order to determine if the school made AYP.

**Part V. Safe Harbor**

For each student subgroup that fails to attain the state benchmark, then a safe harbor determination will be made. Essentially this is a measure of improvement for subgroups. To determine whether a subgroup made safe harbor, the pass rate for the group from the previous year is compared to the current year's pass rate. If the <u>failure rate</u> from the previous year is decreased by 10%, the group has made safe harbor.

For example, the subgroup is limited English proficient (LEP) students; in 2002, 30 percent of the LEP students scored proficient. Thus, there was a 70 percent failure rate. If the failure rate is reduced by 10%, this student group will make safe harbor. The safe harbor calculation is shown below:

| 2002 results show | 30% LEP students are proficient <br> and <br> 70% are not proficient (failure rate) |
|---|---|
| Then 10% of 70% = | 7% increase in proficient rate |
| Then 30% pass + 7% proficiency increase = | 37% proficient rate needed for LEP students to make safe harbor |

This calculation must be done for <u>each</u> subgroup not attaining the benchmark. All subgroups must attain either the benchmark or safe harbor for the school to make AYP. A final check for each subgroup will be made using secondary measures. But first, the key question to ask is:

- Did each subgroup, not attaining the benchmark, make safe harbor by reducing last year's failure rate by 10%?

If the answer is "yes" for all subgroups, the school has made safe harbor and AYP.
If the answer is "no" for any subgroup not meeting safe harbor, then the school failed to make AYP.

## Part VI. Final Data Checks

### <u>Step 1</u> – Secondary Measures for Safe Harbor

For any subgroup that has made "safe harbor", secondary measures must be applied. The key questions to ask are:

- At grades 4 and 8, did each subgroup making safe harbor also have an average daily attendance rate of 90% or better?

If the answer is "yes", the group made safe harbor and attained the secondary measure indicator.

- At grade 11, did each subgroup making safe harbor, also have a dropout rate of 2.6% or less?

If the answer is "yes", the group made safe harbor.

If the answer is "no", then did the dropout rate for the group decrease by .5% over the previous year?

If the answer is "yes", the group made safe harbor.

### <u>Step 2</u> - Final question

- Is there a final "yes" response for the total school enrollment and each student subgroup?

 If the answer is "yes", then the school has made AYP for this content area.

Now repeat the process in the other content area, mathematics or language arts literacy. If the answers are "yes" in this content area as well, the school has made AYP for the year.

# State Benchmarks for Adequate Yearly Progress

| Content Area | Test | Starting Point 2003 | 2004-2005 | 2007-2008 | 2010-2011 | 2013-2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Language Arts Literacy | NJASK | 68 | 75 | 82 | 91 | 100 |
| | GEPA | 58 | 66 | 76 | 87 | 100 |
| | HSPA | 73 | 79 | 85 | 92 | 100 |
| | | | | | | |
| Math | NJASK | 53 | 62 | 73 | 85 | 100 |
| | GEPA | 39 | 49 | 62 | 79 | 100 |
| | HSPA | 55 | 64 | 74 | 86 | 100 |

# ACCOUNTABILITY WORKSHEET

**Check one:    Mathematics                                    Language Arts/Literacy**

|  | | | | **YES** | **NO** |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Were 95% of all students enrolled tested?<br>Multiple measures:<br>• Did the school meet ADA standards? (K-8)<br>• Did the school meet drop-out standards? (9-12) | | | • <br>• <br>• | | | If no, the school did not make AYP |
| • Were all new (mobile) student results pulled out?<br>• Were clustered students added to home school? | | | • <br>• | | | If no, make adjustments. |
| **Test Results**<br>• Add 5% to all pass rates (to control for misclassification)<br>• Pull out from review any subgroup w/less than 20 students | | | • <br><br>• | √ <br><br>√ | | Calculations made by NJDOE. |
| Did the following groups make standards on:<br>• Total Students:<br>Race/ethnicity<br>• White<br>• Black<br>• Hispanic<br>• Asian<br>• Native American/Indian<br>Student groups<br>• LEP (includes English & Spanish tests)<br>• Special Education (includes regular admin. & APA)<br>• Poverty (Free & reduced price lunch) | **Yes** | **No** | • <br><br>• <br>• <br>• <br>• <br>• <br>• <br><br><br>• <br><br><br>• | If no, for any group:<br><br>Did they make safe and harbor?<br><br>• <br>• <br>• <br>• <br>• <br><br>• <br><br>• <br><br><br>• | Did they meet secondary measures?<br><br>**Yes**   **No** | |
| | | | | If yes is entered for each checkpoint, the school made AYP.<br>Repeat for next content area. | | |